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Canada. Railways, Canals and
Telegraph Lines, Standing
Committee on
HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Twenty-third Parliament

1957

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STANDING COMMITTEE

ON

RAILWAYS, CANALS AND TELEGRAPH LINES

Chairman: GORDON K. FRASER, ESQ.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AND EVIDENCE

No. 5

including 9th Report

BILL No. 194 (Letter L-6 of the Senate)

An Act to amend An Act respecting the Buffalo and
Fort Erie Public Bridge Company.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1957

WITNESS:

The Honourable Donald M. Fleming, Minister of Finance.

EDMOND CLOUTIER, C.M.G., O.A., D.S.P.
QUEEN'S PRINTER AND CONTROLLER OF STATIONERY
OTTAWA, 1957.

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
RAILWAYS, CANALS AND TELEGRAPH LINES

Chairman: Gordon K. Fraser, Esq.,
and Messrs.

Barbes	Holowach	McPhillips
Batten	Howe (<i>Vice-Chairman</i>)	Muir (<i>Cape Breton</i>
Begin	Johnston (<i>Bow River</i>)	<i>North and Victoria</i>)
Bonnier	Kennedy	Murphy (<i>Westmorland</i>)
Blanchette	Lafontaine	Nixon
Brassard	Lavigne	Olson
Broome	Leboe	Phillips
Bryce	Lewry	Rea
Byrne	Macdonald (<i>Vancouver-</i>	Rouleau
Chevrier	<i>Kingsway</i>)	Small
Crouse	MacDonald (<i>Antigonish-</i>	Smith (<i>Calgary South</i>)
Dupuis	<i>Guysborough</i>)	Smith (<i>Lincoln</i>)
English	Marler	Smith (<i>Simcoe North</i>)
Fairfield	Martini	Smith (<i>Battle River-</i>
Fisher	McBain	<i>Camrose</i>)
Gauthier (<i>Lac St. Jean</i>)	McDonald (<i>Hamilton</i>	Stanton
Gauthier (<i>Chicoutimi</i>)	<i>South</i>)	Stuart (<i>Charlotte</i>)
Grills	McGrath	Taylor
Haidasz	McIlraith	Villeneuve (<i>Roberval</i>)
Harrison	McIvor	Vincent
Herridge	McLeod	Winch
		Wratten

A. Small,
Clerk of the Committee.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE

MONDAY, November 18, 1957.

Ordered,—That the Standing Committee on Railways, Canals and Telegraph Lines be empowered to examine and inquire into all such matters and things as may be referred to it by the House; and to report from time to time its observations and opinions thereon, with power to send for persons, papers and records.

TUESDAY, November 26, 1957.

Ordered,—That the quorum of the said Committee be reduced from 20 to 12 members, and that Standing Order 65 (1) (b) be suspended in relation thereto.

Ordered,—That the said Committee be empowered to print such papers and evidence as may be ordered by the Committee, and that Standing Order 66 be suspended in relation thereto.

TUESDAY, December 3, 1957.

Ordered,—That the said Committee be authorized to sit while the House is sitting.

THURSDAY, December 12, 1957.

Ordered,—That the following Bill be referred to the said Committee:
Bill No. 194 (Letter L-6 of the Senate), intituled: "An Act to amend An Act respecting the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Company".

Attest.

Leon J. Raymond,
Clerk of the House.

REPORT TO THE HOUSE

FRIDAY, December 13, 1957.

The Standing Committee on Railways, Canals and Telegraph Lines has the honour to present the following as its

NINTH REPORT

Your Committee has considered the following Bill and has agreed to report it without amendment:

Bill No. 194 (Letter L-6 of the Senate), intituled: "An Act to amend An Act respecting the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Company".

A copy of the Committee's Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence in respect of the said Bill is appended hereto.

Respectfully submitted,

GORDON K. FRASER,
Chairman.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

FRIDAY, December 13, 1957.

The Standing Committee on Railways, Canals and Telegraph Lines met at 10.00 a.m. The Chairman, Mr. Gordon K. Fraser, presided.

Members present: Messrs. Blanchette, Broome, Bryce, Fraser, Grills, Haidasz, Kennedy, Lavigne, Lewry, Martini, McIvor, McLeod, Olson, Small, Smith (*Lincoln*), Stanton, and Wratten—(17).

In attendance: The Honourable Donald M. Fleming, Minister of Finance; Mr. Richard A. Bell, M.P., Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance; and Mr. John A. MacDonald, Treasury Board Division, Department of Finance.

The Committee commenced consideration of Bill No. 194 (Letter L-6 of the Senate), "An Act to amend An Act respecting the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Company".

On motion of Mr. Small, seconded by Mr. Broome,

Resolved,—That the Committee print 700 copies in English and 200 copies in French of its Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence in respect of Bill No. 194, An Act to amend An Act respecting the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Company.

On Clause 1:


The Minister of Finance made a statement explaining the purpose of the Bill and was questioned thereon.

After consideration and discussion, Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive, the Title and the Bill were adopted.

Ordered, That the Chairman report the said Bill to the House without amendment.

The Committee adjourned to the call of the Chair.

A. Small,
Clerk of the Committee.



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EVIDENCE

FRIDAY, December 13, 1957.

10:00 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, we have a quorum. This morning we are on Bill No. 194 (Letter L6 of the Senate), An Act to amend An Act respecting the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Company.

We have the Minister of Finance, the Hon. Donald Fleming, here this morning and he would like to say a few words before we start on the bill. Before we do that, however, I would like to have a motion regarding the printing of our evidence.

Mr. R. H. SMALL: I move, seconded by Mr. Broome, that the committee print 700 copies in English and 200 copies in French of the minutes of proceedings and evidence in respect of Bill No. 194, An Act to amend An Act respecting the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Company.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. M. DONALD FLEMING (*Minister of Finance*): Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I would like to thank you very much for the privilege of appearing before you and for the opportunity to say a few brief words about this bill. This bill, Mr. Chairman, was reviewed in the House of Commons yesterday. It is a bill to amend a statute that was passed in parliament in 1934 setting up the authority in which the Peace bridge between Fort Erie and Buffalo is vested. The bill has elements of very great urgency about it because the authority is an international one, with both Canadian and American representatives on it. The Canadians have been in a minority hitherto. Action, as outlined yesterday, was taken through legislative channels in New York State by which things were done without any concurrence on the part of this country, that quickly had to be undone. In the course of undoing what was rashly done over there, and which required not only action on the part of the New York State legislature, but also the Congress as well to undo, the American representation was set at five members, commencing January 1. The Canadian representation on this authority has consisted of three members hitherto, and one of the great elements of urgency in this bill is that we have authority to fix the number of Canadian representatives at five as from January 1st, so that there will be equal representation and in that way full safeguard for Canada's interests. That is one of the leading features of the bill.

It will be seen that, to cover the case where any Canadian member is not able to attend a meeting, in order to ensure that there will be full representation and five votes for Canada on any matter which might involve, a difference, provision is made for substitution for any absent member on such occasions.

Then there is the provision made here also, for the vesting of the property in Her Majesty in right of Canada to be disposed of as the governor in council may direct, on the latter of two dates namely, the first day of July 1992 or, secondly, the day that any bonds issued by the bridge authority prior to the first day of July, 1992, are paid in full or are otherwise discharged.

There is also provision that any money payable to the government of Canada shall be paid to the Minister of Finance and shall form part of the consolidated revenue fund.

Those, Mr. Chairman, are the provisions of the bill. It is a very short bill but an urgent one. In my statement in the House of Commons yesterday, I reviewed fully the history of this bill and the procedures of the bridge authority hitherto.

The CHAIRMAN: Now, gentlemen, you have heard the minister. Are there any questions?

Mr. STANTON: I was wondering whether the Canadian government made any representations to the New York state or the American authorities in regard to this calculation of the representation on that bridge authority.

Hon. Mr. FLEMING: That, sir, has all been done and the present measure is the outcome of the negotiations between our government and the American authorities and this present bill represents the extent of agreement that was reached.

Mr. STANTON: I presume it was on a friendly basis and the American authorities did not quibble.

Hon. Mr. FLEMING: That was all touched on yesterday in the House of Commons and reference was made to the fact that these negotiations were carried on in a very amicable way. Mr. Houck, member for Niagara Falls, who spoke in the house yesterday warmly in support of the bill, did make reference to the fact that the negotiations themselves had contributed very considerably to the spirit of goodwill at the border.

Mr. OLSON: Would the minister tell us what reasons the Americans gave for increasing the membership?

Hon. Mr. FLEMING: As a matter of fact, it was an action taken by the New York state legislature, we think rather hastily, without reference to this country, and it involved questions as to the title to the bridge and also the relationship of the American interests in the bridge to the Buffalo port authority.

It was a matter of hasty action, if I may say so, on the part of the New York legislature and it was following that enactment that the attorney general of New York pointed out to the legislative authorities of the state that they had exceeded their authority in the action which they had taken.

Now, the Americans on their part, both in the legislature of the state of New York and in the Congress have now done all that is required by them to be done to undo what was done on that occasion and to enable us to proceed on the basis of the provisions of the bill now before us.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions, gentlemen?

Clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4 agreed to.

Title and the Bill agreed to.

Shall I report the bill?

Agreed to.

The committee adjourned to the call of the Chair.